



# GUIDELINES

## **Guideline G.01 – Guidelines for Hazard Reduction Zones**

### **G.01.1 PURPOSE**

The purpose of this guide is to provide information necessary to ensure the modification, and maintenance of the vegetation in areas adjacent to structures in order to create a defensible space between the structure and the vegetation. Persons owning, leasing, controlling, operating, or maintaining buildings or structures requiring defensible space are responsible for modifying or removing non-fire resistive vegetation.

### **G.01.2 SCOPE**

All structures including any attachments to that structure located within designated Hazard Reduction Zones shall comply with the requirements outlined in this document. Requirements for new construction are found in Guideline G.02, "Fuel Modification Zones".

The requirements found in this guideline only apply to those sides of the structure that face the wildland area.

### **G.01.3 DEFINITIONS**

**Defensible Space:** An area either natural or man-made, where vegetation and other natural fuels have been treated, cleared, or modified to slow the rate and intensity of an advancing wildfire. The defensible space created allows firefighters to suppress the advancing fire and protect the structure. Defensible space also reduces the chance of a fire in a structure from moving into the surrounding wildland area.

**Hazard Reduction Zone:** Sub-area of the Special Fire Protection Area containing structures built prior to July 1, 1999 and not designate as a Fuel Modification Zone.

**Special Fire Protection Area (SFPA):** Any geographical area designated by the Fire Chief where structures directly abut wildland space or a fuel modification zone on one or more sides. Special Fire protection areas include, but are not limited to, Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones. These areas are subject to a greater risk of wildland conflagration due to vegetation, topography, weather, density, access and other relevant factors. Special Fire Protection Areas include both Fuel Modification Zones and Hazard Reduction Zones.



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## G.01.4 PROCEDURE

### MAINTENANCE OF DEFENSIBLE SPACE

#### 1. Structure Side Yards:

- For the purpose of firefighter entrance and egress provide three feet of clear access along both sides of the structure.

#### 2. **Trees:** All trees located within 100 feet of any portion of a structure, which is facing an urban wildland interface area, shall comply with the following guidelines:

- Existing trees are not required to have a separation of tree canopies but must be maintained free of all dead or dying foliage.
- The selection of any new trees shall be made from the fire resistive plant list, and the trees shall be planted such that mature canopies will have a minimum separation of ten feet. For the purposes of this document, branch tip to branch tip is synonymous with the term canopy to canopy.
- Trees shall be maintained free of dead wood and foliage, and all dead trees shall be removed.
- Where shrubs are located within the drip line of a tree, the lowest tree branch shall be at least three times as high as the shrub. This process will remove the potential for fires to spread from lower shrubs and bushes to higher trees and structures.
- Trees extending to within five feet of any structure shall be pruned to maintain a minimum clearance of five feet.

#### 3. **Shrubs and Bushes:** All shrubs and bushes located within 100 feet of any portion of a building shall comply with the following guidelines:

- All dead and dying growth shall be removed from shrubs and bushes.
- All shrubs and bushes **not** on the fire resistive plant list shall have a minimum separation of ten feet apart branch tip to branch tip.
- One to three shrubs and bushes together in a small group can be considered a single bush if properly maintained.



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- All shrubs that are listed on the fire resistive plant list need not be separated if properly maintained as determined by the fire code official.
  - Vines and other climbing plants are prohibited from growing on structures.
4. **Ground Cover:** All ground cover located within 100 feet of any portion of a building shall comply with the following guidelines:
- Ground cover that is properly planted, irrigated, and maintained is permitted within the defensible space.
  - Non-planted areas may be covered with a maximum of five inches of chipped biomass or its equivalent.
  - All ground cover that is either dead and/or dying shall be removed.
5. **Firewood:** Firewood and combustible material for consumption on the premises shall not be stored in unenclosed spaces beneath buildings or structures, on decks or under eaves, canopies of other projections or overhangs. Storage of firewood and combustible material stored in the defensible space must be located a minimum of 15 feet from structures and separated from the drip lines of trees and shrubs by a minimum of 15 feet.
6. **Roofs:** All roofs of structures in designated wildland fire hazard areas shall comply with the following guidelines:
- Leaves, needles, twigs, and other combustible matter shall be removed from roofs and rain gutters.
  - Any portion of any tree, bush, or shrub which is located within ten feet of the outlet of a chimney, shall be removed.
  - All chimneys attached to any appliance or fireplace that burns solid fuel shall be equipped with an approved spark arrester constructed in accordance with the California Building code. The spark arrester screen shall be made from a material that is both heat and corrosion resistant, and the openings shall not permit the passage of spheres having a diameter larger than one half inch.

Nothing contained in this section shall be deemed to preclude the fire code official from requiring more than the minimum specific requirements set forth above when the fire code official determines that conditions exist, which necessitate greater fire protection measures.